

Bird Island Basin (BIB) – Summer 2010 Update

Boater and Windsurfer Safety

For many years boaters and windsurfers have coexisted but not without several incidents. Too many boaters either don't know or don't care about giving windsurfers the right of way or maintaining a safe distance away from windsurfers. At least one windsurfer has been hit, damaging the board only and another barely avoided being hit by diving for the bottom to avoid the boat that never slowed down or changed course. In addition, the No Boat buoys at the cut-off to the boat ramp are regularly ignored by boaters who run through the windsurfing area rather than going around the Horseshoe Spoil at the north end.

Several months ago informal communication with the Chief Ranger began to address these safety concerns and some progress has been made. Three new buoys have been installed at the No Boat cut-off to the boat ramp at the north end. These buoys have about five feet of chain so they float and reposition as the tide changes. Prior to installing these buoys rangers did some random checks in this area and will continue to monitor this area. The rangers have given many warnings to boaters and are prepared to write citations now that all the buoys have been installed.



To establish a line of sight between the south and north of the windsurfing area and around the Horseshoe Spoil to the boat ramp some additional buoys have been installed and some of the older buoys were moved further away from shore. The buoy line is intended to identify the no boat area which runs from a half mile south of Worldwinds around the Horseshoe Spoil to the boat ramp channel.



Submerged Obstructions

Three water hazards have been identified around the first and second spoil islands. A very large concrete pipe which is always underwater just off the sandbar between the two spoil islands has been permanently marked with a rock hazard buoy. The small tree branch near the second spoil island is temporarily marked with a stake and will not be marked permanently. On the IWC side near the first spoil island a shallow area of rocks is temporarily marked with a broken mast base. A metal obstruction was also found in this general area but it is still not marked. A recent attempt to find and mark this hazard failed to locate it again, hopefully it has been removed but that is not certain.

Also there are two posts about 6" from the bottom and along the water line, one at space #37 and the other at #40 that are often under water and could be a hazard when walking in that area. When the water level drops enough the park will be requested to see if it is possible to pull them out or dig and cut some off below the bottom.

CCWA and your help

First and most importantly, do everything possible to avoid a collision regardless of right of way. It is also important to report boater safety concerns, boat registration, ignoring No Boat areas and unsafe distance, to the rangers whether or not there is damage or injury. In some cases it may be appropriate to file a written report with the park.

The CCWA intends to promote water safety and encourages all windsurfers to be aware of their surroundings. In the future perhaps the CCWA and park management can work together and create an informational handout to be given to all boaters at the park entrance. This could serve as a reminder to boaters to be aware and maintain a safe distance away from windsurfers. Without feedback to the CCWA and PINS nothing will be resolved and problems will go unchecked. If you have any comments, concerns or other suggestions please let us know.

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